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Monday, 6 May 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Menan	(Togo)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rule of procedure, I invite Ms. Mary Robinson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Ms. Robinson, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Dublin.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. Robinson.

Ms. Robinson: I am pleased and honoured to have this opportunity to speak to the Council this morning, following my first visit to the Great Lakes since being appointed on 18 March as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the region. The Council's role in new efforts to forge peace will be crucial, and it has already taken important decisions. I look forward to close consultation with the Council and to its strong support moving forward.

The reason I accepted the responsibility of Special Envoy is because I know this to be one of the longest enduring, most appalling human rights, women's rights, children's rights and humanitarian crises, with levels of death, violence and suffering that are totally unacceptable. This time we have to tackle it differently and sustain the political will.

I believe we meet at a moment of renewed opportunity. There is a fresh chance to do more than just attend to the consequences of conflict or to manage crises of the kind seen again most recently last November. There is a chance to resolve its underlying causes and to stop it for good. Hope and possibility must now infuse what will be a very challenging process to implement the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

There are reasons to hope that the new Framework can work. For one, it represents a comprehensive agreement requiring actions at all levels, by all who have responsibilities — nationally, regionally and internationally. It includes mechanisms of oversight, both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the region, to ensure that benchmarks are set and met. It has the support of 11 nations and the involvement of the four organizations that are its witnesses. It has emerged at this time precisely as a result of exhaustion with the continuing cycles of crises and a broad realization that there is a need for a new approach.

That is why, as I made my first visit in this capacity to the region, last week, I described that agreement as a framework of hope. For if this new attempt is to succeed where others have fallen short, there must be optimism and courage in place of cynicism. The Governments and the peoples of the region and the international community must believe once again that peace can be achieved and must take the necessary actions to obtain it. As that process advances, it must bring hope to the people who are the victims and who will ultimately be its beneficiaries.

As I carried that message with me around the region, I also made it clear that my approach as Special Envoy would be different. I will of course focus much of my energies on engaging with the leaders and the Governments of the region in order to build trust and help them translate their commitments into tangible plans and actions for peace. At the same time, I will also be working from the bottom up. I will be engaging with civil society, as I believe it will be essential to generate the broadest possible constituency for the agreement. If people are engaged and take ownership of the process, they can become a strong force for implementation. I believe this new effort will have a chance only if many partners are coordinated and pushing in the same direction.

I have summarized this personal vision of the Framework and my approach as Special Envoy in a document entitled "A framework of hope". I am sharing it with the Council today, as I did with all my interlocutors during my trip to the region. It reflects my own sense of the spirit of the agreement and how I can contribute most effectively to its implementation.

Having made those introductory comments, let me turn now to a more detailed summary of my recent

visit, before leaving the Council with some concluding remarks.

Between 28 April and 5 May, I visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo — both Kinshasa and Goma — Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and South Africa. I would have liked to have visited the other countries signatories to the Framework agreement but, regrettably, time and other scheduling constraints did not permit. Where I was unable to do so, I wrote to the leaders concerned and indicated that I would visit more countries during subsequent trips to the region in the coming months.

During my first visit to the region, I met with Presidents Kabila Kabange, Museveni and Nkurunziza, and had a long telephone conversation with President Kagame, who was out of the country. I also met with the Governor of North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Paluku, and the Minister of Defence of Uganda, Mr. Kiyonga, in his capacity as facilitator of the Kampala talks between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M-23). I met with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Dlamini-Zuma, her Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Diarra, and the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Mr. Ntumba Luaba.

In all the countries I visited, I also held extensive meetings with United Nations entities, including the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Office in Burundi, the country teams, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the diplomatic corps and the donor community.

Finally, in each place, I expanded my consultations to include civil society, in the broad sense of the term, and even more so women's groups, with whom I intend to work closely to implement my mandate.

I would like to state my heartfelt appreciation to all the officials and actors that I met during my visit, for their very warm welcome and their expression of support for my future activities as Special Envoy.

The purpose of my visit to the region was threefold: first, to seek the views of leaders and others on the implementation of the Framework, particularly on the establishment of the oversight mechanisms and the development of benchmarks for the commitments of signatories; secondly, to encourage participation in the first meeting of the "11+4" oversight mechanism, planned for 26 May on the margins of the African Union jubilee summit, in Addis Ababa; and, thirdly, to share my vision and approach for the Framework, which I shared with the Council at the outset of this briefing.

While I was familiar with the issues and knew most of the leaders in the Great Lakes region before assuming my position, I undertook the visit in my new capacity first and foremost to listen to the concerns of those on the ground affected by the crisis in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from the leadership to the ordinary citizens. I had frank and warm discussions with all my interlocutors. During my meetings with each leader and Government official from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries, we discussed in detail their commitments as outlined in the Framework, and I stressed that they should be fulfilled. I called upon civil society groups to encourage their Governments to respect their commitments and to hold them accountable. Equally important, I stressed that the implementation of the Framework was a shared responsibility and that success would be predicated upon each and every party living up to their commitments, given the monumental challenges ahead of us.

My visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular took place against the backdrop of tensions produced by M-23 statements in reaction to the upcoming deployment of the Intervention Brigade. In Kinshasa and Goma, the overwhelming majority of the Congolese I spoke to were enthusiastic about the deployment of the Brigade — a feeling that is understandable. I stressed at the same time that the Intervention Brigade, while an important tool, should be seen as one element of a much larger political process aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to the crisis in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although at an apparent stalemate for now, the Kampala talks are also part of the efforts towards a regional peace initiative, and I called on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to remain committed to that process with a view to expediting it as soon as possible. The current focus on the Intervention Brigade, which in my view should act mostly preventively, as a deterrent, with limited strategic military operations, needs to be put in context to minimize potential adverse impacts. It would be vital

that it operate in full compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law and with maximal consideration for the protection of civilians. Many in the humanitarian community, as well as officials in Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, expressed concerns about the need to manage the potential consequences of the military operations. I am glad to note that MONUSCO is already undertaking mitigating measures in that regard.

President Kabila informed me that his Government was working on a plan of action for the implementation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's commitments under the Framework, including on the composition and modalities of work of the national oversight mechanism. I stressed the importance of the inclusiveness of such a national mechanism, which should involve civil society representatives and have the necessary expertise to play an effective supervisory role. Both President Kabila and his Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me that at least the architecture of the national oversight mechanism would be ready for the first meeting of the 11+4, to be held in Addis Ababa on 26 May.

I am also glad to report some encouraging news at the regional level. As with President Kabila, I had frank discussions with Presidents Museveni, Kagame and Nkurunziza. All three stated their readiness to implement their commitments under the Framework and, as I said earlier, expressed support for my mandate as Special Envoy. It is encouraging to see that the leaders in the region, particularly Presidents Kabila and Kagame, continue to talk to each other, either bilaterally or through the ICGLR.

In Kampala, I had fruitful discussions with President Museveni and the facilitator of the Kampala talks, Minister of Defence Crispus Kiyonga. They both underlined that the dialogue remains a viable avenue to end the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. While recognizing progress on key points of the agenda of the dialogue, they spoke of stalemate in others, particularly on the issues of amnesty, integration and disarmament. We exchanged views on how to move the process forward.

The ICGLR has played and continues to play a very important role under the leadership of its Chair, President Museveni. The regional initiatives have helped mitigate the impact of the crisis, and it is important that the international community, including the Security Council, acknowledge that role if we want to make progress under the renewed partnership to end the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as clearly spelled out in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. I intend to work closely with my African Union and ICGLR partners in Bujumbura and Addis Ababa to ensure that we have a coordinated and concerted approach.

It is important that the people in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Great Lakes region as a whole, feel that there is a peace dividend to enjoy. There is room for further regional economic cooperation provided that trust is restored between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours. I was told that the last summit of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), which includes Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, was held almost 20 years ago. President Nkurunziza, who will host a CEPGL ministerial meeting next week in Burundi, has pledged to continue his efforts to revitalize that regional economic institution. As I was departing Kigali, Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Louise Mushikiwabo, was flying to Kinshasa for consultations on joint economic projects and other peace and security matters. Those economic consultations had been underway prior to the straining of their relations due to the past year's crisis.

In discussions in Pretoria with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, I learned about encouraging measures that the South African Government has taken or plans to take to boost its economic partnership with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its assistance to Kinshasa in sectors such as governance, agriculture, infrastructure and revenue collection. The good will of South Africa was confirmed in a telephone conversation with the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, and in a meeting with the Minister of the Presidency, Mr. Collins Chabane. They confirmed the strong support of President Zuma, who was on his way back from a meeting in Congo-Brazzaville at the time.

Those bilateral and trilateral economic initiatives are positive steps that could greatly contribute to the restoration of trust between the countries of the region. We need to support them, and I am very glad that already there is good will from the donor community and the international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank, to help the Great Lakes region.

Looking ahead, as mentioned earlier, the African Union and the United Nations will be organizing the first meeting of the 11+4 oversight mechanism on 26 May in Addis Ababa. Between now and then, I will be working on a concept paper, to be presented to regional leaders, on how this regional oversight mechanism and its supporting technical committee might operate. I am aware that given the short amount of time and the important events of the jubilee itself, the meeting may only take the process a small way forward. However, I intend to continue consultations with each and every signatory of the Framework on that matter, so as to present an approved set of benchmarks to the next meeting of the 11+4 oversight mechanism at the General Assembly in September. Just after the Addis Ababa meeting, on 26 May, I will head to Paris to attend a meeting of the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region on 28 May. I intend to encourage participants to coordinate their efforts more in support of the Great Lakes region.

I am heartened that President Museveni will organize a Summit of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, probably in July, to take stock of the recent developments and define ways in which the region intends to work with the signatories and partners of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. In the meantime, building on current initiatives and existing regional forums, including on a regional plan of action for resolution 1325 (2000) of my African sister, Bineta Diop, of Femmes Africa Solidarité, I intend to mobilize the women of the Great Lakes countries to play an active role in support of the Framework. I also intend to work closely with the concerned authorities in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross to encourage the organization of a dedicated working meeting on refugees at a date to be determined. Finally, I am already planning my second visit to the region later this month.

Let me conclude by reminding us of the tragic history that remains inescapably attached to this problem — one that still scars the Great Lakes and this very institution of the United Nations, and one that also fuels my own personal commitment to this assignment. Next year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the genocidal killings in Rwanda of 1994. I reflected about that last week when visiting the genocide memorial site in Kigali. As President of Ireland, I was the first Head of State to visit Rwanda in 1994 in the aftermath of the genocide. In the Hotel Mille Collines, where I stayed, there were still walls stained with blood. In 1995, I spoke of those horrors at the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, because it was a reality that had to be confronted.

Only three years after that first visit after the genocide, I was back in Rwanda, attending a vibrant pan-African women's conference in a nation that was already on the mend and moving forward. Yet two decades later, that past is not yet fully behind us. Its echoes remain present in the horrific, cyclical violence that continues to deprive so many of the secure and peaceful lives they deserve. In this framework of hope, we have an opportunity to get it right — to bring peace, security and development at long last to the region and its people. Now is the time to begin translating its broad commitment into tangible actions for peace.

There are no guarantees that this new push for peace will succeed. However, we can be sure that, if it fails, the consequences will be grave. We can also be sure that, however determined I am personally to this challenging assignment, the new push for peace will not succeed through the efforts of one person or one brigade, or any other action taken in isolation. No — it will require an all-out concerted series of actions that are both serious and sustained, at the national, regional and international levels. It will require doing things differently, doing them better and not stopping until the job is finished.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Robinson for her briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.